

**Merrimack School Board Meeting
January 3, 2011
Merrimack High School – Cafeteria**

PUBLIC SESSION MINUTES

PRESENT: Chairman Vaillancourt, Vice Chairman Thornton, Board Members Barnes, Ortega, Swonger and Student Representative McLavey. Also present were Superintendent Chiafery, Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin, and Business Administrator Shevenell.

1. Pledge of Allegiance

Chairman Vaillancourt led the pledge of allegiance.

Chairman Vaillancourt called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m.

2. Approval of December 14, 2010 Minutes and December 20, 2010 Minutes

Board Member Barnes moved (seconded by Board Member Ortega) to approve the December 14, 2010 minutes.

Board Member Barnes requested the following corrections.

- Page 2 of 4, paragraph one, line four, change the word “mark” to “market”.
- Page 4 of 4, paragraph five, find another word for “housekeeping”.

Board Member Swonger requested the following corrections.

- Page 1 of 4, remove Board Member Swonger’s name from the list of attendees
- Page 4 of 4, last line, change the vote to reflect “4-0-0”.

Vice Chairman Thornton requested the following corrections.

- Page 3 of 4, requested the high school section include the Board’s discussion regarding the 70 computers.
- Page 4 of 4, paragraph nine, line two, remove the words “pick-up and”.

The motion passed as amended 4-0-1 with Board Member Swonger abstaining.

Approval of December 20, 2010 Minutes

Board Member Swonger moved (seconded by Vice Chairman Thornton) to approve the December 20, 2010 minutes.

Board Member Barnes requested the following corrections.

- Page 2 of 6, section 4, line two, remove the words “it could apply the Ed Jobs funding”.
- Page 5 of 6, paragraph six, add the word “discussing” before the word “opting”.
- Page 5 of 6, paragraph six, add the words “through the budget” to the end of the sentence.
- Page 5 of 6, paragraph six, the second sentence should read “She will report options investigated by Parks and Recreation Director Kalish.”
- Page 4 of 6, change the word “Update” to “Updated” in the title of section 7.

Board Member Swonger requested the following corrections.

- Page 1 of 6, line nine from the bottom of the page, change the word “decrease” to “decreased”.
- Page 4 of 6, section seven, line two, add the word “and” between the words “questions recommended”.

Chairman Vaillancourt requested the following corrections.

- Page 3 of 6, paragraph two, line five, add the word “half-time” between the words “one kindergarten”.
- Page 5 of 6, line ten, add “and the community outreach officer at the upper elementary school” to the end of the sentence.
- Page 5 of 6, line ten, add “at the upcoming Town Council budget hearing on January 3, 2011” at the end of the sentence.

The motion passed as amended 5-0-0.

3. Public Participation

There was no public participation.

4. Draft Warrant Articles for the 2011 Warrant

Business Administrator Shevenell presented the draft warrant articles to the Board.

- Article 1 is the election of school district officers.
- Article 2 is authorization for the District to be able to accept gifts, legacies, and property during the fiscal year without further action by the voters.
- Article 3 is the collective bargaining agreement between the Merrimack School Board and the Merrimack Teachers Association.
- Article 4 authorization for one special meeting to address Article 3, cost items only, if Article 3 is defeated.
- Article 5 is authorization to establish a special services and central office consolidation capital reserve fund in the amount of \$200,000 or 20% whichever amount is less.
- Article 6 is the operating budget.

Business Administrator Shevenell explained that warrant article 3 raises \$630,656 for year one. The article also acts to reduce the operating budget by \$450,000 in the area of health insurance due to a changed plan design and an increase in the amount of the employee contribution for healthcare costs. article 3 increases the operating budget \$180,000.

Chairman Vaillancourt noted that article 3 represents a two-year contract instead of a three-year contract.

Vice Chairman Thornton emphasized that article 3 consists of an increase due to salaries and benefits and a decrease due to an increase in the employee contribution level for healthcare as well as a change in the health plan design. She noted the complexity of article 3 and asked that article 3 be explained in the voter guide.

Board Member Swonger stated that the increase portion of article 3 is smaller than the decrease portion of article 3.

Business Administrator Shevenell stated that the change in the healthcare contribution has saved the district considerable money over the years.

Chairman Vaillancourt suggested that the explanation of article 3 be added to the financial section of the district's web page for the public to review.

Board Member Barnes asked how article 6 would be addressed based on the passage or failure of article 3.

Business Administrator Shevenell responded if article 3 were to pass and article 6 were to pass, then article 6 would be reduced by \$450,000.

Board Member Barnes asked if the wording of article 6 could include the amount of the decrease to the operating budget should article 3 pass.

Business Administrator clarified that the passage of article 3 would affect the amount of the operating budget only, not the amount of the default budget.

Chairman Vaillancourt clarified that the default budget is a finite number which is based on the current budget. She stated that past practice of previous Boards has not been to spend the extra surplus money added into the operating budget at a deliberative session. She stated that legally the Board could spend surplus money if the operating budget failed and the default budget became operational, but, would like to believe that it wouldn't.

Superintendent Chiafery noted that the wording of article 3 had been reviewed by legal council and needed to remain unchanged. She suggested that the questions raised by the Board be clarified in the voter guide.

Business Administrator Shevenell stated that he wanted to consult with legal council with regards to article 6 referencing article 3.

The Board agreed on an amount of \$200,000 or 20% whichever amount is less, for article 5, a Special Services and Central Office Consolidation Capital Reserve Fund.

Board Member Barnes suggested that if the surplus were to be significantly less than \$200,000 the Board should have discussion about how current events affect the Capital Improvement Plan.

Chairman Vaillancourt stated that she would be willing to have a Capital Improvement Plan discussion. She did not feel comfortable making a formal commitment regarding the Capital Improvement Plan at that point in the election cycle.

Board Member Ortega noted that the Capital Improvement Plan is assessed annually against realities.

Chairman Vaillancourt stated that the Capital Improvement Plan is reviewed annually and that it can change from year to year.

Board Member Swonger stated that he did not feel that the public was aware of the need for a consolidated special services and central office building, nor the work that had already been done. He supports getting that information out to the public two years prior to the proposed project.

Board Member Ortega asked if the Board was required to set aside any amount of money and if so, is there a specific amount that is required.

Business Administrator Shevenell responded that the consolidation of the special services and central offices project could be bonded at 100% of the cost of the project.

Chairman Vaillancourt wants the public to be informed of the increase in the employee contribution level for healthcare.

Chairman Vaillancourt stated that the Board would vote on each warrant article at the next meeting.

5. Merrimack School District Budget Committee Meeting Schedule

Superintendent Chiafery stated that the first Budget Committee meeting would be held on Tuesday, January 11, 2011 (snow date January 13, 2011) at the James Masticola Elementary School in the all purpose room beginning at 7:00 p.m. Superintendent Chiafery also noted that the food service, James Masticola Upper Elementary School and maintenance budgets would be presented that evening.

6. Response to Proposed New Hampshire School Board (NHSBA) Resolutions

Superintendent Chiafery introduced the discussion of the second half of the New Hampshire School Boards Resolutions. She explained that this would provide an opportunity for Board Member Barnes to understand the Board's position on each of the resolutions in preparation for attending the Delegate Assembly.

- *New Hampshire School Boards Association Resolution #13, Re-codification of Education Statutes:*

Board Member Ortega moved (seconded by Board Member Barnes) not to support resolution #13. The motion passed 5-0-0.

- *New Hampshire School Boards Association Resolution #14, Adoption of Federal Curriculum Standards (Common Core Standards):*

Board Member Swonger moved (seconded by Board Member Ortega) to support the alternative recommendation for resolution #14. The motion passed 5-0-0.

- *New Hampshire School Boards Association Resolution #15, Opposition to the Bullying Statute:*

Board Member Ortega moved (seconded by Board Member Swonger) not to support resolution #15 but to support the sentiment that generated resolution #15. The motion passed 5-0-0.

- *New Hampshire School Boards Association Resolution #16, Opposition to the Unfunded Mandates in the Pupil Safety and Violence Protection Act and New Hampshire School Boards Association Resolution #17, Opposition to Additional Costs in the New Bullying Law.*

Board Member Barnes moved (seconded by Board Member Ortega) not to support resolution #16 as submitted but to support the alternative adoption for resolution #16 and not to support resolution #17. The motion passed 5-0-0.

7. Other

a) Correspondence

Chairman Vaillancourt reported that the Board received email correspondence from Budget Committee member George Markwell requesting that the School Board consider any funds pertaining to a combined special services and central office building be placed on a warrant so the voters would have a say in the matter.

b) Comments

Chairman Vaillancourt reported that Merrimack High School Principal Johnson, Vice Chairman Thornton and she attended a Town Council meeting in support of the high school resource officer position and the utilization of Officer Kelleher at the upper elementary school. She noted that many people expressed their concern over the proposed reductions in the police and fire department budgets.

8. New Business

There was no new business to report.

9. Committee Reports

There were no committee reports.

10. Public Comments on Agenda Items

There were no public comments to report.

11. Manifest

The Board signed the manifest.

At 8:35 p.m. Board Member Barnes moved (seconded by Board Member Swonger) to adjourn the meeting.

The motion passed 5-0-0.